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Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR: SA
SUBJ: SAUDI NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITORIAL FROM THE APRIL 17 EDITION OF THE SAUDI ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY "ARAB NEWS" REPEATED FOR YOUR INTEREST UNDER THE HEADING "MILITARY EQUIPMENT".

2. BEGIN TEXT:
FRIDAY'S COMMENTS BY THE COMMANDER OF U.S. ARMY IN EUROPE, GEN. GEORGE BLANCHARD, ON THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN UNITS IN EUROPE, TELLS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HIS COUNTRY'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL, AND THE LENGHTS TO WHICH THE UNITED STATES WILL GO TO PROTECT THE JEWISH STATE. GEN. BLANCHARD SAID THAT AMERICAN UNITS IN EUROPE HAVE BEEN "LARGELY" REEQUIPPED SINCE 1973, WHEN THEY WERE STRIPPED OF WEAPONRY AND EQUIPMENT TO SUPPLY THE BELEAGUERED ISRAELIS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE RAMADAN WAR. IF GEN. BLANCHARD IS CORRECT, THERE HAS BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN U.S. MILITARY STRENGHT IN EUROPE SINCE LAST SUMMER, WHEN ARMY SECRETARY MARTINH HOFFMAN SAID THERE WAS " STILL A PROBLEM" OF SHORTAGES IN TANKS AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS IN EUROPE.

AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERTS HAVE LONG BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT THE DEPLETION OF U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN EUROPE
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TO BOLSTER THE ISRAELI WAR MACHINE IN THE 1973 WAR. UNIT COMMANDERS IN EUROPE HAVE JUSTIFIABLY FELT THAT THEIR OWN TROOPS WERE BEING PLACED IN UNNECCESSARY JEOPARDY TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. THESE COMMANDERS REALIZE THAT AT BEST THEIR UNITS ARE "SACRIFICIAL LAMBS" WHICH COULD SLOW BUT NOT STOP A SOVIET THRUST INTO WESTERN EUROPE. THEY KNOW THAT IN THE FINAL

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ANALYSIS, A SOVIET INVASION COULD ONLY BE HALTED BY THE USE OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS. BUT THE EXTRA HOURS OF REACTION TIME THAT THE U.S. GROUND UNITS IN EUROPE COULD PROVIDE AGAINST A COMMUNIST ATTACK ARE CONSIDERED ALL-IMPORTANT, AND TO BE ABLE TO FURNISH THAT CRUCIAL CUSHION, THE TROOPS NEED A FULL COMPLEMENT OF TANKS AND OTHER MILITARY EQUIP-MENT. IF THAT EQUIPMENT IS IN ISRAEL RATHER THAN IN EUROPE, NATO'S DEFENSIVE STRATEGY HAS TO BE MODIFIED, IF NOT SCRAPPED.

NOW, FOUR FULL YEARS AFTER THE RAMADAN WAR, AMERICAN UNITS IN EUROPE ARE UAID TO BE BACK TO FULL STRENGHT. AND DURING THAT FOUR YEAR PERIOD, NATO FORCES HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY UNDEREQUIPPED AND VULNERABLE TO A SOVIET ATTACK. IF PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD PONDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FACT-WOULD REALIZE HOW MUCH ISRAEL INDED CONSTITUTES A "MILITARY BURDEN"-- THEY MIGHT BE MORE UNDERSTANDING WHEN SOMEONE LIKE A GENERAL BROWN PUBLICLY QUESTIONS THE COUN-TRY'S LIFE -AND-DEATH EMBRACE WITH THE JEWISH STATE.
END TEXT
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